

# AZERBAIJAN

## 1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

In Azerbaijan over the past five years, measures have been further strengthened to ensure gender equality, promote the culture of gender equality as well as women's empowerment, with changes introduced in respective legislative acts, and implementation of gender policy improved at central and regional authorities, and self-governing bodies (municipal institutions). Pursuant to Article 20 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's 10 October 2006 Law on gender equality (between men and women), the underlying legal document to ensure gender equality, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs (SCFWCA) shall submit an annual progress report to Milli Majlis, the country's legislature.

Baku hosted the 6th Congress of Azerbaijani women (on 19 October 2023), and two international conferences *Promotion of Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment* (20-21 November 2023), chaired by the Republic of Azerbaijan and co-chaired by Uganda and Uzbekistan and attended by Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) member states, and *Prevention of Domestic Violence: Opportunities and Prospects* (6-7 December 2023).

On 16 June 2022, the Government of Azerbaijan submitted the 6th periodic report on the findings of implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, at the 82th session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Geneva. On 12 July 2022, CEDAW approved the corresponding Concluding Observations for the periodic report in question. Consequently, the Committee has welcomed the following efforts by the State Party to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality:

- Order No. 602 on the employment strategy for 2019–2030 to promote inclusive employment and reduce unemployment among women, in 2018.
- National action plan on the prevention of domestic violence for the period 2020–2023 was adopted in 2020;
- National action plan on combating trafficking in persons for the period 2020–2024 was adopted in 2020;
- Action plan on the prevention of prenatal sex selection for the period 2020–2025, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) of the Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted in 2020
- Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), in 2019.

The World Bank has carried out a technical assistance project on lifting barriers to women employment in the Republic of Azerbaijan to eliminate sexual discrimination and promote employment opportunities for women. The project has resulted in amendments and alterations in the Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan to enhance employment

opportunities for women, make arrangements for gender equality and women's involvement in sectors with higher monthly earnings (closing gender pay gap), and protect women's rights in compliance with international labor norms and standards. Consequently, the law #629-VIQD, of 5 November 2022, "On introducing changes in the Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan" has entered into force leading to a CoM draft decision to abolish the *List of industries, occupations (job titles), and underground works (674 occupations (job titles) and work places) barring female labor force participation due to harmful and harsh working conditions*, approved by CoM Decision #170, of 20 October 1999, and *industries, occupations (job titles), and underground works (204 occupations (job titles) and work places) barring the employment of pregnant women and women having a child less than one year old, due to harmful and harsh working conditions, and harmful production factors (78 in total) pregnant women and women having a child less than one year are prohibited to come into contact with it*. Subsequently, the CoM decision was approved as decision #172, of 31 May 2023.

Besides, a draft law "On introducing changes in the Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan," designed to eliminate sexual discrimination and involving respective changes in Articles 98, 242, etc. of the Labor Code, was approved as law #1063-VIQD, of 22 December 2023. Pursuant to that law, pregnant women as well as women having a child less than 14 years old, and child with a disability less than 18 years old shall be permitted, as men but upon giving their written consent, to be involved in jobs implying night working hours, work overtime, and business trips.

Meanwhile, a draft law "On introducing changes in the Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan" has been designed to include a provision for paid leave of 14 calendar days shortly before and after the (estimated) date of delivery, for men whose wives are on a maternity leave due to pregnancy or childbirth, on the basis of a certified statement by a competent health facility.

## **2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?**

The 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved under the 27 November 2020 Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and successfully implemented afterwards. Work is underway to draft the corresponding National Action Plan for subsequent years.

Meanwhile, efforts have been undertaken to design a draft National Action Plan on gender equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan, a new document deemed instrumental in implementing the country's gender equality policy. The goal of the Plan is to secure the sustainability of measures aimed at ensuring gender equality. Consequently, the objectives of the draft National Action Plan on gender equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan cover principal areas such as further refinement of the existing legislation in the field of gender equality and women's rights, raising people's awareness of gender equality and women's rights, strengthening measures to counter gender-based violence (GBV), preventing and tackling gender stereotypes and discrimination, building up

measures in the field of reproductive health and family planning among people, particularly women and younger generation, and increasing women's participation in political and public life, decision-making and governance. Following discussions at the Public Council under SCFWCA and among non-governmental organizations, the draft was sent out to ministries, state committees, government agencies, and other executive authorities, subsequently coordinated with relevant authorities, with submission to CoM afterwards.

Over the past five years, the 2019-2030 Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the 2020-2024 National Action Plan to combat human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the CoM Action Plan on the prevention of gender-biased sex selection for 2020-2025 were approved to promote inclusive employment in the country and decrease unemployment among women.

### **3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?**

Since 2011 SCFWCA has set up women's resource centers (WRC) to support the provision of favorable conditions for economic and social activity of rural women since 2011. In addition to the delivery of vocational training, including computer courses, WRC organize awareness-raising community meetings, including school gatherings attended by community members, pupils, parents, and teaching staff to discuss a variety of topics such as prevention of early marriages, truancy (failure to attend school) among girls, domestic violence, and human trafficking, and gender equality, human rights, financial literacy, reproductive health, consequences of drug addiction, gender-biased sex selection and its consequences, family budget management, improvement of business and leadership skills, reinforcement of entrepreneurial activity, and ways to found an NGO and write a CV.

The principal purpose behind the creation of community resource centers (CRC) is to identify primary urgent needs, and extend support for the provision of socio-economic recovery, including psycho-social and business advisory services. Having helped most vulnerable communities and assisted them with identification of their primary urgent needs, CRC has taken action to support the most affected sections of the population with respect to the provision of socio-economic recovery, including bettering their living conditions, and offering psycho-social and business advisory services, thereby remaining focused on women, children, and people with disabilities.

The two-year technical assistance project *Building Society for All Ages: promoting well-being among the elderly people in Azerbaijan through active ageing*, between the Government of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), approved by the CoM Order #236, was implemented since March 2019 through December 2021. The project pursued the goal of supporting arrangements for the elderly to get access to social and healthcare services, including adjustment of social inclusiveness and integration patterns to relevant policy tools, ultimately leading to the enhancement of the state care about the elderly, material and moral needs satisfaction, and provision of decent life conditions.

Social services were provided for the elderly in centers for day care in Gakh, Ganja, Gazakh, and Khachmaz, within the framework of the project *Operationalization of the Centers for Day Care for the Elderly*, implemented under social orders of the Agency for Social Services (ASS) in 2022.

To carry out social rehabilitation centered activities, since the onset of 2021 specialized social service centers at relevant ASS branches have worked on the rehabilitation of juveniles with disabilities. Pursuant to the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on social service, Occupational Rehabilitation Centers for People with Disabilities under ASS provide social services, depending on their forms and types, for people with disabilities, prepare them for the occupation chosen, and work on the rehabilitation of their respective labor capacity.

Furthermore, psychological and social rehabilitation services were provided to 300 beneficiaries of the project *Social and Psychological Rehabilitation of the Children with Disabilities (autism)*, implemented under ASS social orders in 2022.

The project *Provision of Mobile Social Rehabilitation Services for Children with Disabilities* was implemented in different urban and rural areas of the country in 2020, under social orders as a response to global challenges and constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in compliance with the requirements stipulated in the corresponding CoM decisions. Consequently, social rehabilitation services were provided to more than 3,000 juveniles with disabilities in their respective capacity as project beneficiaries.

Within the framework of the project *Operationalization of the Centers for Social Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities*, implemented under ASS social orders in 2021, social services were provided to 6,200 juveniles with disabilities in their respective capacity as project beneficiaries, in 62 urban and rural administrative divisions of the country. Rehabilitation-covered juveniles received social and psychological rehabilitation, ability-enabling and family support and family awareness-raising services from professionals. In 2022, the same project reached out to 2,500 beneficiaries in 25 urban and rural administrative divisions of the country, to provide them with relevant social services.

#### **4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?**

WRC and child and family support centers, operating under SCFWCA, did not provide the complete range of services for the population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In accordance with COVID-19 rules, a total of 3,254 people benefited from SCFWCA-conducted online and offline training courses, sessions, and psychological and social assessments. Meanwhile, SCFWCA organized an online meeting for parents to engage themselves in discussions with psychologists over psychological issues and solutions for families during the COVID-19 pandemic of psychologists.

WRC rendered psychological assistance to 880 families, and delivered food and medical assistance (medical drugs and appliances, including sanitizers) to 440 families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lockdowns and movement control orders imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020, had a positive impact on family relationship, and promoted closer ties between working parents and their children. However, domestic violence cases were not immuned to the movement restriction regime – a phenomenon observed all over the world. Consequently, families experienced strained psychological and social environment with consequences as far as dissolution of marriage cases. According to the State Statistics Committee (SSC), due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of registered new marriage cases plummeted from 63,869 in 2019 down to 35,348 in 2020, while the number of divorce cases changed from 17,148 in 2019 to 14,628 in 2020.

SCFWCA conducted a poll among 648 respondents to study the impact of the strict movement restriction ('special quarantine') regime on interactions among family members.

The Association for the Development of Women Entrepreneurship (ADWE) in Azerbaijan provided advisory services and delivered training courses for women entrepreneurs to overcome business challenges they had faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the majority of sectors provided online services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With education (training and learning) activities going online, families started to use ICT extensively. Development of knowledge about ICT and promotion of the broad use of ICT technology among women exposed the importance of the corresponding measures to ensure better accessibility of educational, employment and other services.

COVID-19 consequences caused severe risks, particularly restrictions on economic opportunities for both sexes in almost all areas of public life. That specified the implementation of more rigorous and holistic measures by the state to support and incentivize employment and strengthen social protection of vulnerable sections of the population by the state. Approval of the National Action Plan on the implementation of employment strategy for 2020-2025 had a positive effect on upgrading women's competitive position on the labor market, thereby weakening their economic dependence status.

To expand opportunities for better handling of applications and calls, the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudswoman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan ensured better operability of a 24/7 hotline 916, and four regional centers to make arrangements for women belonging to different sections of the population to get full access to the sources of referral to the ombudswoman during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?**

A draft National Action Plan on gender equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan, designed by SCFWCA and submitted to the Government of Azerbaijan for approval, has contemplated the implementation of a series of measures to ensure gender equality, access to justice, quality education for women and girls, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls as well as gender stereotypes, expansion of room for women's participation in political life and empowerment in general.

Meanwhile, a new state program is mulled to enhance employment and social engagement among women, as well as utilize the existing potential of the working age population.

Another priority on agenda for the state employment policy is to increase women's participation in the labor force and widen opportunities for their employment. Addressing problems with employment among women has been stipulated in the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019–2030, approved by the 30 October 2018 Order No. 602 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Within the framework of the Strategy, a series of measures is taken to ensure gender equality in the field of employment, involving an upgrade of women's competitive position on the labor market, support of entrepreneurial activities among women, referral to vocational training and additional (extracurricular) education for job-seeking and jobless women, establishment of facilities for self-employment, ultimately driving potentially sizable labor force to join the labor market.

## **6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?**

Recognition of non-formal learning and informal education in the Republic of Azerbaijan started in 2020, following the issuance of the corresponding CoM decision. Since then, special attention has been paid to the assessment and recognition of knowledge and skills women had acquired through non-formal and informal learning. A particular focus has been made on the assessment and recognition of professional occupations (pastry cook, sewing machine operator (seamstress), nurse, and hairdresser/ visagiste/ manicurist) that largely account for women's employment.

Consequently, the development of competency (work)-based occupational and qualification standards seems to be central to staff capacity building to meet labor market requirements, and provision of efficient employment opportunities for job-seeking and jobless people, and the overall improvement of the competitive position of national workforce on the labor market. In 2020-2022, a total of 1,008 (504 occupational and 504 qualification) standards was formulated for 14 major activity sectors and then brought up for discussion at thematic (sectoral) commissions before approval by the corresponding collegial decision of the Ministry for Labor and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP) and subsequent entry in the relevant register. A number of business entities already applied these standards. In addition, work is underway to develop a new set of 300 (150 occupational and 150 qualification) standards.

In 2023, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education launched the project *Professional Women*, funded by Pasha Holding LLC, to assess the qualifications of women living in the country's regions and support them in obtaining the corresponding educational documents.

The Agency for Small and Medium Business Development (KOBIA) carries out a string of projects to promote women entrepreneurship and increase the number of women among small and medium-scale entrepreneurs. Centers for Small and Medium Business Development (CSMBD), constituting organizational units of KOBIA, delivered a wide range of training courses for small entrepreneurs, start-ups on different topics (marketing, sales, corporate law, financial management, business automation, compilation of statements/reports, business plan writing, etc.) over the past five years, thereby reaching out to nearly 16,000 women either involved in entrepreneurship or willing to set up their own business. In 2019-2023, the majority of training courses was mainly focused on:

- ✓ Ganja CSMBD delivered the training course *Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship*, in cooperation with the Ganja Center for Disabled Women and Children and Disabled Women's Society, and the second event covering the same topic, in cooperation with Women's Shelter operating under *Tamas Regional Development* Public Union;
- ✓ Baku, Shamakhy-Ismayilli, and Masalli-Jalilabad-Bilasuvar CSMBD organized and delivered training courses for 65 women, in the framework of the project *My School* jointly implemented by the State Employment Agency (SEA) and United Aid for Azerbaijan (UAFA), with CSMBD experts conducting sessions on a wide range of topics, including support for the calculation of the cost price of goods, services and groups of goods, investment plan writing, expenditures and revenue planning, compilation of income statements, planning of overhead, business plan writing, etc.;
- ✓ Goychay-Aghdash CSMBD and the regional WRC co-organized and delivered the training course *Start and Develop Your Business* to transfer and develop relevant knowledge and applied skills for women willing to create a new business or develop the existing one(s);
- ✓ Tovuz CSMBD delivered the training course *Know Your Customer* for women entrepreneurs, with CSMBD experts conducting sessions on a range of topics, including the role of employee (workplace) culture and expectations in customer satisfaction, and service culture to ensure and improve customer satisfaction;
- ✓ Masalli-Jalilabad-Bilasuvar CSMBD delivered the online training course *Business Plan Writing*, in cooperation with UAFA, to educate women entrepreneurs on how a business plan is written and structured, as well as requirements for and rules of business plan writing;
- ✓ Tovuz CSMBD also delivered the training course *Business Psychology* for women willing to start a business, with CSMBD experts conducting sessions on a range of topics, including realization of business ideas, setting up the right plan at the right time, components of a business plan, SWOT analysis, etc.;

- ✓ Sumgayit CSMBD delivered the online training courses *ISO 9001 Quality Standard*, and *Economic Empowerment of Women in Regions: Outlook and Opportunities*, for micro and small entrepreneurs;
- ✓ Yevlakh CSMBD delivered training courses *Taxation and Legal Aspects of Business*, and *Project Writing and Management*, for members of Azerbaijan Business Women Public Union;W
- ✓ Goygol-Dashkasan CSMBD delivered a series of training courses for members of the Goygol Club of Women Entrepreneurs to support the improvement of their respective digital skills, with CSMBD experts conducting sessions on the development of digital skills, including the creation of gmail and social media accounts, posting photos and videos on social networking platforms, including digital marketing competencies and practical skills.

**7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?**

Within the framework of the 2nd phase of the *Global Programme to Prevent Son Preference and Gender-biased Sex Selection*, UNFPA, in cooperation with MLSP, the Ministry for Youth and Sports (MYS), and SCFWCA, implemented the European Union funded project *School for Dads – a Transformation of Responsible Fatherhood*, and organized camps for male juveniles and *Girls in STEAM* camp (for girls), as well as the Debate Forum, and carried out public awareness raising and advocacy campaigns, to eliminate gender stereotypes, promote responsible parenting concept, advocate the delegation of household chores evenly between a man and a woman.

Meanwhile, the Social Support Center under MLSP implemented the project *Box for a Newborn Daughter*, to support families welcoming a newborn daughter(s). Consequently, 90 families in their respective capacity as project beneficiaries received a box containing baby care items, a set of clothing, and guidelines on baby care and upbringing at an initial stage. The project was piloted in three administrative divisions of the country, with gradual rollout to take place at subsequent phases.

Furthermore, in June 2023, gender equality training courses were organized for secondary education textbooks authors and relevant specialists, within the framework of the *EU4Gender Equality Reform Help Desk* programme, in cooperation with the European Union.

To forestall the skewed sex ratio at birth, the CoM Order #71, of the 24th of February 2020, approved the Action Plan on the prevention of gender-biased sex selection for 2020-2025. In the framework of the Action Plan, a wide of measures are taken to provide reliable and accessible data on the skewed sex ratio at birth and corresponding performance indices, refine the existing legislation, expand room for the support to girls and women to better tackle gender discrimination and inequality, strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising activities to address gender stereotypes, and build up interagency coordination and cooperation.



SEA under MLSPP has implemented a self-employment initiative since 2017, to boost employment opportunities for job-seeking and jobless people. Women's self-employment is a priority issue on the Agency's agenda. More than 78,000 job-seeking and jobless people benefited from this initiative, building up small family businesses.

## **8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?**

In 2020, the project *Digital Girls – National Training Program* was successfully launched to develop IT knowledge among women and make their interest in ICT grow. The Project reached out to 560 school- and adolescent girls to involve them in training courses of digital technology. The Center for ICT Application and Training (CICAT) under the Ministry for Digital Development and Transport (MDDT) deployed its training instructors to deliver two-day training courses to introduce computer technology as well as personal development skills and their practical application to become successful. Besides, female participants got to know about ways to build up a prosperous career in the ICT field. The Project was implemented by CICAT, at the initiative and through financial support provided by MDDT and UNESCO.

Furthermore, MDDT organizes an annual event dedicated to the International Girls in ICT Day, to raise awareness of young girls of technology, draw their attention to the importance of the respective educational attainment leading to broad employment opportunities, and involve them actively in the digital world.

In 2021, MDDT and Girls Code Azerbaijan, a nonprofit organization, organized the joint event *R Programming: Data Analysis and Visualization*, for female students, to hold discussions over the role of the R programming language and demonstrate practical examples of its employment in the technological field. Besides, MDDT, in cooperation with FemTech platform fostering female entrepreneurial minds, as well as AREA-Azerbaija Robotics Engineering Academy, and Dars Evi education management company, organized and delivered the webinar *Women and Technological Development* to educate the audience, composed of female students, on an alternative design of and a new generation approach to human-robot interaction (HRI), and innovation versus a professional woman in modern times.

An event dedicated to the International Girls in ICT Day took place on the 28th of April 2022, through organizational support of MDDT and financial support provided by *Zafar* Public Union for the Support of Families of Fallen Heroes. The objective of the event, organized at the Ground Station for Satellite Control of Azercosmos, the Space Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and attended by children of fallen heroes, was to stir up girls' interest in ICT and encourage them to master the corresponding occupation in the relevant field. The audience were provided extensive information about history of and purpose behind International Girls in ICT Day, as well as evolution of ICT, including its role in the modern era. Two interactive infosessions followed, to provide information about successful women in the field of technology and subsequently, involve girls in discussions over a wide range of topics, such as the space, astrophysics, satellites, early computers and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) technical disciplines.

The Azerbaijan Office of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), MDDT and the Electronic Security Service (ESS) of MDDT combined their efforts to organize and deliver the training course Cyber4Girls in September 2023, on the occasion of the International Girls Day. An ESS representative made presentations on the rules of cybersecurity for children, personal data protection, and the rules of use of social media. The training course was aimed at raising the awareness of girls of cybersecurity, and informing them of cyber hygiene rules and personal data protection. Presentations followed on cybersecurity and cyber hygiene, personal data and ways to safeguard their security, antivirus software, malicious active content, social engineering attacks, including phishing, and cyberbullying. The knowledge-sharing event took place under the umbrella of the memorandum of understanding, signed between MDDT and KOICA in September 2023, and within the framework of the project *Cyber Security Capacity Building: 2021-2023*, the beneficiary of the KOICA CIAT grants programs.

**9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**

The Entrepreneurship Development Fund under the Ministry of Economy (MoE) of the Republic of Azerbaijan extended more than AZN48 mn worth of soft loans for 751 investment projects that accounted for the creation of more than 1,000 jobs.

On gender equality, CSMBDs delivered the following training courses:

- ✓ Khachmaz CSMBD, in cooperation with ADWE, conducted a training course under the project Women's Capacity Building and Empowerment for Sustainable Development through Gender-based Cooperation, with a Khachmaz CSMBD expert providing information on gender equality, changing relevant social perceptions, and promotion of equal rights and level-playing field for women and men;
- ✓ Khachmaz CSMBD, in cooperation with ADWE, conducted training courses *Gender Awareness-raising and Sensitivity*, and *Digitization for Small Businesses: Applied Solutions*, under the project Women's Capacity Building and Empowerment for Sustainable Development through Gender-based Cooperation.

KOBIA implements the project *German-Azerbaijann Joint Programme on Advanced (further) Training Courses for Managers in Azerbaijan's Business Environment*, to take measures aimed at increasing theoretical knowledge of local entrepreneurs and managers through German training centers, introducing innovative technology, management methods, and patterns of business operations of German enterprises, upgrading vocational training level, and establishing economic cooperation (business ties) with German enterprises. Since the inception of the project, 560 entrepreneurs and managers, including 122 women have become its beneficiaries.

In accordance with the Guidelines for the Provision of Funding for Educational, Scientific, Research, and Support Projects on Micro, Small and Medium-scale Entrepreneurship, KOBIA started the provision of funding for educational, scientific, research, and support projects of small and medium business entities in 2021. The first grant competition took place at the beginning of 2021, with the corresponding awards applying to 15 projects, including the three submitted by women entrepreneurs. In general, four competitions were run, with 11 women entrepreneurs declared winners. To market handwork items produced by women entrepreneurs, KOBIA organized regular sales exhibitions and fairs in Baku and different regions of the country.

#### **10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

The 22 April 2022 Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan approved the Strategy for Socioeconomic Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026. Improving Access for women to economic benefits is a top priority enshrined in the Strategy, with Section 3.2, Strategic Framework for Dynamic, Inclusive and Social Justice Society, stands for the growth of economic activity among women, promotion of their employment in sectors with higher (monthly) earnings, and advice on career development, and implementation of profession-oriented and other active employment measures.

Since 2021 KOBIA has issued start-up certificates to small and medium business entities. So far 130 businesses, including 19 women entrepreneurs have obtained the start-up certificate, thereby exempting the holder from profit and/or income tax, to be imposed on revenues from innovative activities, for three years, according to the Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In the framework of the project *Gender-based Economic Support for Women*, funded by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by Social Progress Public Union, through KOBIA support, each of beneficiary businesses received equipment and appliances worth of 5,000 euros. Consequently, women entrepreneurs who benefited from training and advisory services of Khachmaz CSMBD received financial (grant) support to start their own business, following successful evaluation of their respective business plans. Moreover, 14 female candidates received financial (grant) support from the project *Accelerating Development of Sustainable Micro-entrepreneurship in Rural Regions of Azerbaijan*, funded by the European Union and implemented by the Azerbaijan Microfinance Association (AMFA), to start their own business. Sub-grant awards allowed women, operating in the Guba-Khachmaz economic region, to set up businesses with the focus on selling handwork items, operating a beauty salon, running a vocational training course on handicrafts, etc.

Yevlakh CSMBD, in cooperation with Zardab District Youth and Sports Department of MYS, and Youth Support Public Union organized, through financial support of the Agency for State Support to Non-governmental Organizations (ASSNGO), the *Forum of Entrepreneurship as Occupation for Young Girls* within the framework of the project *Promotion of Vocational Education, Individual Labor Force, and Entrepreneurship*.

Since 2022 KOBIA and Rabitabank have implemented the project *Women's Power in Business*, receiving applications from 134 women entrepreneurs, with 23 candidates, involved in manufacturing, agriculture, trade and commerce, regarded as compliant with relevant criteria. The shortlisted candidates attended around 10 Project-organized training courses to increase their respective knowledge about business, and were provided with advisory and mentorship support. Meanwhile, to promote social integration and entrepreneurship among people with disabilities and members of vulnerable social groups, a separate project *Support for Disabled Entrepreneurs* was materialized, reaching out to 51 female beneficiaries, including 12 dressmakers in their respective capacity as women entrepreneurs, while 26 more women remain on SEA's waiter list. Furthermore, seven women received a dressmaker certificate, while six got certified as a carpet weaver.

#### **11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

To strengthen social protection of the population, measures have been carried out over the past five years to increase the amount of social benefits, pensions, and other payments. Besides, the scope of social protection and employment programmes has expanded broadly, and important arrangements have been made for a shift from the single-window system to an electronic format to ensure the provision of social services.

Following social reforms, the overall amount of social benefit and pension payments went up by a factor of five, with more than 10 new types of social payment introduced, thereby reaffirming the ground for a number of human-centric approaches that ultimately resulted in further expansion of the scope of the social security system.

Pursuant to Articles 7.0 and 7.0.2 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on social benefits, and given the circumstances stipulated in Article 14.4. of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on labor pensions, a person who is disabled, not working due to partial or total loss of working capacity and therefore not eligible for a labor pension, shall have the right to a social benefit. The term disabled person shall mean a person who has reached the retirement age, established at 65 for men and 63.5 for women, which makes him/her eligible for a labor pension, according to Articles 7 and 8 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on labor pensions.

Pursuant to Article 8.1 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on labor pensions, a woman shall have the right to labor pension or social benefit five years ahead of the above-mentioned age limit if she has given birth to, adopted and/or established guardianship of five or more children and subsequently raised them until the age of eight or brought them up.

Following recent scale-up of employment opportunities in the country, MLSPP continued efforts to improve and streamline, expand the scope and range of active employment measures available on the labor market for job-seeking and jobless people, as well as renew the existing procedures in the relevant field(s) and make arrangements for their introduction in the electronic format.

## **12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

28 August 2020 – training courses were organised for doctors and nurses of obstetrics, gynaecology, neonatology and paediatrics departments, counselling centres for women, children outpatient clinics and district hospitals with a view to streamlining health care for mothers and children at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

23 November 2020 – the *Innovations in Neonatology-2020* international congress was staged in pursuit of enhanced knowledge and skills in protection of maternal and child's health in paediatricians, neonatologists, obstetricians–gynaecologists, family GPs, therapists as well as other qualified medical staff. The other goal that was sought was to acquaint the local medical staff with modern international practices.

11-18 December 2020 – the Public Health and Reforms Centre (PHRC) and the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research Institute (OGRI) held online training sessions, which had been organised to improve mothers' and children's health to the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

14-16 April 2021 – the Public Health and Reforms Centre (PHRC) held an online training session *A Modern Approach to Preventive Pregnancy-Related Risks*. The aim of the free session was to improve obstetric and gynaecological services, raise the professionalism in the medical specialist staff employed at birth assistance institution in town and provinces around the country, and to improve their theoretical backgrounds and practical skills.

24 June 2021 – educational materials compiled by the Public Health and Reforms Centre were printed out and presented to the *Pure World* Public Association for the Assistance to Women. Booklets and fliers *The Algorithm to Quit Tobacco-Smoking, A Means to Quit Cigarettes, Be Active Physically!, Harmful Substances* and so forth were distributed to the tenants of the Women's and Children's Shelter that operates under the auspices of the *Pure World*. Compiled for the purposes of health enlightenment of women, the said materials also contained thorough information and recommendations as to the provision of first aid, wholesome lifestyles and family planning.

27 October 2021 – another event themed *The Negative Consequences of Early Marriages and Marriages between Relatives* was organised jointly by the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Science and Education (MSE) and SCFWCA. Held for the students of the Baku State Vocational Training Centre, the event pursued the goal of making adolescents and youth at educational institutions more knowledgeable of healthy lifestyles, reproductive health and family planning, and promoting habits of safe sexual conduct.

3 November 2021 – training sessions aimed at medical personnel and covering involvement of men in antenatal and childcare services started – the implementation of the *Engaging Men during Pregnancies and Delivery* project begun within the framework of the European Union Programme *Gender Equality: Together against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence*. The materials drawn from the training course

were uploaded to the ecourse.az platform and a continually accessible e-course was thus compiled.

8 December 2023 – An awareness-raising gathering on the prevention of gender selection in children before birth was held in the city of Ganja with the participation of students of the Azerbaijan State Agrarian University. The event included a presentation titled *Reproductive Health Protection. The Abortion and the Associated Complications*; ample information was provided about selective abortions and their adverse impacts.

The *Human Organs and Tissues Donation and Transplantation* bill was passed into the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No 189-VIQ on 20 October 2020. This Law defines restrictions on collection of organs from living donors; its Article 18 specifically prohibits collection of organs for the transplantation purposes from pregnant women.

Medical services are as accessible to arrested or imprisoned women convicts as to other persons. Arrested women are held on the dedicated floor of the general building of the Baku Pre-Trial Detention Centre. They are served daily by a medical worker and a doctor. They may also resort to the services of the existing Medical and Sanitary Unit in the isolation ward without hindrance. The Medical and Sanitary Unit, which is in effect the 75-bed in-patient unit of the isolation ward, has a staff gynaecologist. Where necessary, the leading specialists in the employ of the medical institutions subordinated to MoH and the Management Union of Medical Territorial Units (TABIB) are consulted with regards to female convicts or are called upon to examine and treatment; alternatively, the convicts in question are examined and treated at various clinics.

Exactly like all the others, female convicts are, upon conveyance to the Detention Centre, put through the preliminary medical examination. Their health conditions are determined; initial information on infectious diseases and pathologies is compiled; the screening is also done to detect mental and infectious diseases and injuries, if any. Besides, the arriving female convicts undergo clinical and laboratory instrumental checks. Such information is put in each prisoner's medical record and further health activities are undertaken as necessary based on that information. Female convicts are transferred for treatment at the in-patient unit of the Medical and Sanitary Unit or to multidisciplinary health institutions for in-patient treatment as necessary.

Female convicts serve their terms at the modern-standard penitentiary facility that was commissioned in April 2022. The said penitentiary facility has a 2-storey, 48-bed Medical and Sanitary Unit staffed by doctors with different specialisations and paramedics. The Medical and Sanitary Unit has dentistry, ultrasound, gynaecological, ECG examination and x-ray examination rooms as well as a laboratory. All the convicts are in a position to use the services of the Medical and Sanitary Unit freely during the day.

Pregnant women are provided with gynaecological control on the premises; births take place at the maternity homes subordinated to TABIB. Those mothers that choose to keep their babies with them have the babies' health overseen with the help of the paediatricians from the nearest children's out-patient clinics. The Medical and Sanitary Unit has a paediatrician's room and an infant examination room. Babies and teenagers held together with their mothers are provided with medical and prophylactic care (vaccination, periodic dispensary examinations, etc) by the out-patient clinics situated the

closest to the penitentiary facility where female and teenage convicts serve their sentences.

The women are periodically put on mass on-premises collective medical sessions involving doctors from both the public and private sectors; during those, the women are given medical and cosmetology advice as requested. In addition, the existing legislation gives female convicts the right to consult doctors of their own choosing or to use private health services.

Because they belong to a vulnerable group, female convicts are treated as per the pertaining regulations, be it at the detention centre or in the penitentiary. Female convicts are queried about pre-arrest gender equality violation cases and instances of pressure put on them because they are women; such queries are carried out at the initial post-admittance medical check as well as when seeing health care specialists subsequently. As many as 15,523 out-patient and 376 in-patient treatments of female convicts were carried out, and 334 persons underwent medical procedures at health care institutions during 2020-2024. Consultations of 68 medical specialists of various qualifications from the leading medical institutions of the country were organised for female prisoners in the penitentiary. The health services extended to women at penitentiary institutions are accessible and the equivalents of the country-wide health care standards.

### **13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?**

The inclusion of topics on women's rights and gender equality in the appropriate curricular subjects and extracurricular activities taught at the general education tier, subject to pupils' specific age in each given case, is permanently in the focus pursuant to the State Standards of General Education, approved with the CoM Decision # 361 dated 29 September 2020.

Taking into account the importance of the youth education on the equal grounds for the future development of our country the SCFWCA started in 2021 the on-going *Support for Young Girls' Education* campaign. The launch of the campaign was made to coincide with the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the School for Girls established by Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev and the International Girls' Day on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October.

The goals of the campaign were as follows:

- to attract general public attention to the education of girls;
- particularly, to enable girls to benefit from modern education opportunities.

Girls were selected for the campaign based on the following 3 criteria:

- girls from low-income families or representing vulnerable groups;
- girls who scored high at tertiary admission examinations;
- girls from the countryside.

Each of the five business enterprises (Capital Bank, The International Bank, Rabita Bank, Jahan Holding and AgrarCredit Joint-Stock Credit Company) as well as nine businesswomen acting individually took a student girl under their care as a measure to bolster the *Support for Young Girls' Education* campaign. The Campaign was continued in 2022 jointly with the Education Development Foundation under the auspices of MSE. Overall, 25 girls were provided with support in 2022. MSE and SCFWCA inked a protocol of intentions with a view to taking the *Support for Young Girls' Education* Campaign further. The conference *Supporting Girls' Education* was organised by the Education Development Foundation and held jointly with MSE and SCFWCA on the occasion of the International Women's Day in 2023. The *Hanifa Malikova-Zardabi Girls' Education Support* scholarship programme was incepted at the conference. The Campaign has continued as the *Support for the Education of Young Girls* project since 2023. As many as 54 girls received funding to continue their education.

The Student Education Loan Fund was established under the auspices of MSE pursuant to the Decree (No 1367, dated 17 June 2021) of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main operational goals of the Fund were to set up a student loan system to ensure the accessibility of education, as well as to generate equal education opportunities and broaden education's encompassment. The Fund has received applications from approximately 37,000 students since it started lending on 25 November 2021. The number of individual applications on record equals 28,270: 11,655 (41.23%) from male students and 16,615 (58.77%) from female students. As can be demonstrable by the statistical results, women predominate amongst students who benefit from the education loans, which is one of the main factors in the growth of women's access to education.

2 November 2021 – an *Organisation of Tuition* training session was organised by the Republican Child and Youth Development Centre for active teachers.

7 April 2021 – the Republican Child and Youth Development Centre organised a training session called *Education for Everyone*, which was then held in conjunction with the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudswoman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Education Institute of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the ANAS Institute of Law and Human Rights. The training session mainly sought to elevate the professionalism of the specialist and teaching staff at the children's and youth development centres operating in the Republic in the field of legal education, to promote the UNESCO principle of *Education for All*, to inform students about the protection of human rights and freedoms, and to train trainers in the field of law education.

7 April 2022 – MSE organised training session for class masters on the on gender-equal approach in educational process at the Child and Youth Development Centre No 3. The goals pursued were drawing attention to the gender-equal approach and enlightening the teaching staff of the subject.

2 April 2021 – the Child and Youth Development Centre No 2 organised and conducted an awareness event *Everyone has the Guaranteed Human Rights and the Right to be Free*.



The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed Decree 1633 dated 16 March affirming the Trust Funds Project Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Organisation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. This project focuses on the three priorities of the Global Education Coalition – teachers, co-ordination and gender-based success, expansion of the scope and support of sustainability – including also relevant missions:

- 1) development and strengthening of digital skills, distance and mixed teaching methodology capacity of 1 million trainers, teachers and educational community leaders;
- 2) transfer of digital and job acquisition skills to one million young people to make them able to enter the labour market;
- 3) supply of STEAM opportunities and means to one million students – especially, girls and those representing low-income segments of the population.

The Coalition is taking urgent steps to maintain coherence and eliminate the digital divide (gaps).

The purpose of this priority is to attain universal accessibility of education with a focus on the sections of community which are underprivileged socio-economically as well as on children, youth, girls and women living in rural areas. This objective also includes improvement and expansion of co-ordination possibilities and providing educators with the digital knowledge which they can use in their work and daily lives. The special target of this (the Global Skills Academy) is to attain one million youth and equip them with digital and employability skills by generating high-quality and large-scale education opportunities.

10 girls, all in their sixth year of schooling, deprived of parental care and education as well as raised at orphanages were put on a social project that was organised jointly by the MSE, and the ADA University on the funding support from Pasha Bank in 2023. The project sought to represent an exemplary university model and to give the girls a vivid introduction to facilities, specialities, teaching conditions and the educational project as such so as to make certain that girls deprived of parental care would be able to obtain tertiary education eventually.

The Student Education Loan Fund and the SCFWCA signed a memorandum of co-operation on 27 February 2023. It was in the format of that co-operation that meetings with people from socially vulnerable domestic groups were organised at the 11 Child and Family Support Centres of the Committee during March-April 2023. The pupils studying in the provinces, university entrants and their parents were supplied with ample information about the capabilities of the Fund and the student education loans at those meetings.

**14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?**

The households whose eligibility for targeted state social assistance expired as of 1 March, were given an extension period until 1 July 2020 coinciding with the (temporary) deadline for the movement restriction regime in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in accordance with the CoM Decree 'On the facilitation of targeted state social assistance procedures for low-income households under the circumstances to counteract a new type of coronavirus (COVID-19)', No 123, dated 1 April 2020.

In view of the continued movement restriction regime in the Republic of Azerbaijan, people with disabilities, including children with health limitations, under the age of 18, whose disability aid period expired on 1 March 2020, were granted a term extension until 1 July 2020 whilst the extension was granted until 1 September 2020 in those regions (towns) where movement restriction regulations were further tightened. That was done pursuant to the CoM Decree No 128 'On the disability aid term extension for people with disabilities under the circumstances to counteract a new type of coronavirus (COVID-19)' dated 7 April 2020.

Senior citizens over 65 were forbidden to leave home during the movement restriction regime – a measure taken to protect their health, given they were at a higher risk of exposure. In this connexion and as instructed by the country's President, MLSPP moved all the social services to field operation and made them more robust; such services (domestic-related work, purchases of staple supplies and of medications, collection of utility bill payments and so forth) were provided for senior citizens at their respective residences. The fixed-term remuneration mark-up paid to the social service personnel on duty during the special quarantine regime was one time their monthly position salaries (tariffs). As many as 15,000 seniors living alone or having disabilities were served at their homes in Baku as well as the countryside during the movement restriction regime.

Decree No1950 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan 'On several measures to mitigate the negative impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the consequent dramatic fluctuations in world energy and stock markets on the economy, macroeconomic stability, employment issues and business operations in the Republic of Azerbaijan', was issued on 19 March.

CoM issued Decision No 138, dated 13 April 2020, on the coverage of the tuition fees for the students coming from vulnerable segments of the population, following the aforementioned Presidential Decree. Consequently, AZN 40 mn was allocated from the state budget to implement the decision thereof. As a result, some 46,000 electronic student applications were submitted by more than 23,000 students requesting the payment of the corresponding tuition fees from the state budget to cover all academic semesters in 2020 and the spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. The initiative included 24,500 female students – 53% of the aggregate – whose tuition fees were paid by the state.

Additionally, it was planned to develop a mechanism to improve the social protection of low-income families and social groups subject to poverty in the event of a possible crisis. That was elaborated under the Periodic Action Plans for the years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 on the basis of the MLSPPP-UNICEF Azerbaijan Joint Operation Plan. A number of steps were taken during 2022-2023 to elaborate a scenario-dependent

plan aiming to improve the social protection of low-income families and of those subject to poverty in economic crises, pandemics, floods and other emergencies.

**15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?**

Significant efforts have been made in the country over the last five years to curb domestic violence, human trafficking and early marriages. The Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on the prevention of domestic violence defines and governs the means of prevention of violence stemming from the the abuse of kinship, including larger family, and current or former cohabitation as well as the adverse legal, medical and social consequences of such violence. The same law is specific to the social protection of and legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, and elimination of the circumstances that cause domestic violence. This law applies to family members in their respective capacity as close relatives (spouses, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, sibling and step-sibling as well as step-parents and adopted children) and to other relatives in cases of cohabitation; former spouses living together or separately after the dissolution of marriage; natural persons appointed as guardians, persons assigned guardianship or subjects of guardianship; men and women living together, in civil marriage, as well as close relatives living with them. The 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted in 2020.

The Division for Social Social Rehabilitation of Victims of Domestic Violence became operational on 1 August 2021, under the ASS-subordinated shelter for people belonging to vulnerable sections of the population and social rehabilitation unit. The sivation extended social services to 161 people subjected to violence, in the period since 1 August 2021 to 30 January 2024. During the social rehabilitation period, 47 people were integrated back to the society, while 85 people integrated into a family. All the services extended to victims of domestic violence are free of charge, for such category of people is fully supported by the State.

The 2020-2024 National Action Plan to combat human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved with the Decree No 2173, dated 22 July 2020, of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to ensure personal and societal protection against any and all forms of trafficking, to discourage all forms of exploitation of people, particularly women, children and other high-risk population groups, and to protect victims of human trafficking, make arrangements for their social rehabilitation and restoration of their rights in full. The competent ministry carries out regular activities in lilne with the corresponding plan of operations. To meet requirements in the latter document, the Center for the Support of Victims of Human Trafficking under MLSPP ASS, the Executive Administration of Sumgait, the country's third largest city, Sumgait Police Department, and the Absheron-Khizi Regional Education Department combined efforts to organise and conduct awareness-raising activities themed *Early Marriage and Combatting Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking*.

The Center for the Support of Victims of Human Trafficking under MLSPP ASS carries out rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking seeking their reintegration into

society and return to normal lifestyle, and does the social work with the factual and potential victims of human trafficking, provides social services and care for them, and makes arrangements for legal and psychological assistance to the victims in order to restore their rights and eliminate psychological traumas inflicted upon them and members of their respective families. The Center also sets up conditions for medical treatment of the victims to restore their impaired or lost functions through therapeutic interventions, eliminate the consequences of their illness, injuries and psychological damage, and assist victims of human trafficking with professional training, retraining and subsequent employment, as well as continuing education, and provide a temporary residence (shelter) for the factual and potential victims of human trafficking. Since 2020 through 2023, the Centre had aided 279 victims, including 260 women. Referral to the Center is made by the Chief Department for Counteraction against Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), through specialized NGOs and at personal request (in case of potential victims).

**16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?**

The CoM Decision #213, dated 23 June 2020, approved the Regulations governing educational activities to raise awareness of the younger generation of the consequences of early marriage and inbreeding, with the purpose of promoting the importance, protection and preservation of a family institution and marriage. To implement provisions in sub-paragraph 6.1.11 of the Regulations, measures are taken to raise awareness of the youth of health implications of children born to early marriages or inbreeding cases, to expand the vision (world view) of young people living through hardship, in need for social protection, and improve their access to information. The corresponding activities take place at various establishments, including social service institutions, with staff attendance.

The 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved by the 27 November 2020 Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to prevent domestic violence in the country, provide families with timely and comprehensive assistance for the sake of strengthening them, implement the arrangements provided for in the regulatory legal acts governing the ways to combat domestic violence, and increase the effectiveness of such arrangements. Pursuant to the Decree, SCFWCA coordinates the implementation of the arrangements stipulated in the National Action Plan, and submits annual progress reports to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Gender commissions were established in all district (administrative division) municipalities, to raise public awareness of the existing legal and institutional frameworks for the prevention of domestic violence. To implement relevant provisions of the 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan, SCFWCA organised visits to the regions of the country and conducted training sessions for members of GBV and Child Abuse monitoring groups set up under local executive authorities.

Since 1 December 2020, the GVB hotline (860) has become operational as part of cooperation between UNFPA and SCFWCA. The hotline uses get information about GBV and domestic violence, as well as available sport services, and whenever necessary, receive psychological counselling on a free of charge basis.

Since July 2022, the Women's Support Line has become operational with support of SCFWCA, *Hopeful Future* Youth Organisation, and Azercell Telecom LLC, a leading mobile operator in the country. The Women's Support Line 116-111 caters for women in need of psychological support, living in crisis and socially dangerous circumstances, and exposed to domestic violence.

On 1 February 2022, the Care Call Centre (116-123) of ASS was launched and later, in June 2023, intergrated into the Call Centre 142. With the integration complete, the Call Centre 116-123 is available only for victims of domestic violence on a 24/7 basis.

Furthermore, the following measures were carried out within the framework of the *Campaign to Combat GBV*:

- ✓ 2020-2023: child and youth development centres organised *End to Violence!*, *What is Domestic Violence?*, *Let's Not Pass over Domestic Violence in Silence*, *The Negative Impact of Violence*, *Combatting Domestic Violence*, *Domestic Violence – the Scourge of Society*, and *Illegal Child Labour* training sessions, workshops, open lessons and roundtables at educational institutions;
- ✓ 28 April 2021: the Child and Youth Development Centre No 1 organized an awareness-raising event entitled *Domestic Violence – the Scourge of Society*;
- ✓ 12 May 2022: the training session *Strengthened Measures to Preserve the Confidentiality of Information about Victims of Domestic Violence* was organized by the Republican Child and Youth Development Centre and held within the framework of cooperation involving *Pure World* Public Association for the Assistance to Women, the Psychology Research Institute, SCFWCA, the Baku Court of Grave Crimes, and the the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudswoman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- ✓ 30 May 2023: the training session *Gender Equality Approaches in Education* was organized by the Republican Child and Youth Development Centre for the faculty and teaching staff of educational institutions;
- ✓ 18 May – 18 June 2022/2023: – preschool educational institutions organised the events and activities entitled *My Rights and I*, *Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, *Our Law is Our Right!*, *Let Us Know Our Rights and My Rights*, *My Dreams*, within the framework of the *Human Rights Month* declared in the country;
- ✓ 2023: MLSPPP arranged the publication of 2,500 copies of the booklet *Say NO to Domestic Violence!*;
- ✓ The Justice Academy, the Research Centre of the General Prosecutor's Office and the Police Academy conducted the following advanced training courses: *Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* for barristers, and *Combatting Domestic Violence and Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence* for judges.

## **17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?**

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an Order on 27 November 2020 to approve the 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

For its part, CoM issued an Order to approve the Action Plan on the prevention of gender-biased sex selection for 2020-2025. The Plan envisages a population study to assess the scale of gender-biased sex selection, as well as the generation of proposals to ensure gender equality and refine the existing reproductive health legislation. Besides, it incorporates a series of measures such as imposition of tighter controls over the compliance with the *List of Social Indicators for Artificial Termination uça Pregnancy*, awareness-raising activities to prevent cases of truancy (failure to attend school) among girls, stronger support for women to do business, and delivery of more vocational and specialized courses for women to acquire demand-driven professions and trades on the labor market.

In 2020-2021, the twinning project *Strengthening the Capacity of State Bodies and Local Level Referral Mechanisms to Provide Safety and Support to Victims of Domestic Violence in Azerbaijan* was carried out with partner support provided by competent authorities of Lithuania and Austria.

Furthermore, meetings and campaigns on GBV prevention are organised annually, from 25 November to 10 December, to strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising activities at government agencies, non-governmental organisations, secondary and tertiary educational institutions and non-governmental assistance centres operating in Baku as well as regions of the country.

Work is underway to draft, with the involvement of international experts, the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on pro bono legal assistance, to improve the provision of free-of-charge legal aid to low-income groups, in accordance with sub-paragraph 6.1.8 of the 2019-2023 State Program on the Development of the Azerbaijani Justice System, approved by the Presidential Order No 819, dated 18 December 2018.

The Law No 904-VIQD, of 9 June 2023, which has amended the Code of Civil Procedure, stipulates that victims of human trafficking and domestic violence without sufficient means to afford but still in need of professional legal assistance shall be provided with a lawyer at the expense of the State, to defend their respective interests and exercise their procedural rights in civil cases before a court of first instance and an appellate court.

Furthermore, the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the human rights commissioner (ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan was subjected to amendments following the enactment of the corresponding Constitutional Law No 900-VIKQD, dated 9 June 2023. Pursuant to those amendments, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter to be referred to as the Commissioner) shall act as an Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) to monitor and

promote the enforcement of the right to equality, and the prevention of discrimination. The amendments also make provision for the the Commissioner and the monitoring group, performing the corresponding IMM functions, (i) to monitor government agencies, municipal institutions and other authorities; (ii) become acquainted with all the necessary information (documents and materials) in situ and obtain respective copies; (iii) demand all necessary information (documents and materials) or copies thereof from government agencies, municipal institutions and other authorities, as well as their respective officials, and to be provided with such within 5 (five) working days; (iv) document monitoring findings and make recommendations to government agencies, municipal institutions and other authorities and their respective officials regarding the findings of the monitoring thereof; and (v) involve civil society institutions, independent experts and specialists in the monitoring groups.

**18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

The GVB hotline (860) has played a pivotal role in timely prevention of and response to GVB. The GBV hotline (860), designed as a pilot project, was launched by SCFWCA in cooperation with UNFPA and MDDT, and became operational on 1 November 2020. During 2022 it received 269 calls (231 from women and 38 from men), mainly from residents of Baku. The marital, educational and employment status data of the callers were as follows: married – 162, single – 76, divorced – 31; complete secondary education – 171, complete tertiary education – 81, uneducated – 17; jobless – 203, employed - 66. It follows from the overall call statistics that married women, allegedly subjected to domestic violence, aged 19-35, jobless and having completed secondary education accounted for the majority of the calls received.

Since July 2022, the Women's Support Line 116-111 has become operational with support of SCFWCA, *Hopeful Future* Youth Organisation, and Azercell Telecom LLC, a leading mobile operator in the country, to cater for women in need of psychological first aid, living in crisis and socially dangerous circumstances, and exposed to domestic violence. The professional staff provide the callers to the Women's Support Line with access to legal and health services, supply them with employment-related information and render social assistance following the assessment of the caller's family and living conditions. The Women's Support Line received a total of 2,050 calls about various problems: intra-family conflicts (676), domestic violence (361), need for support to get divorced (182), difficulties with alimony payments (235), poor social and financial standing (142), right to health care (105), need for legal aid (320), and sheltered accommodation (29). The Women's Support Line operates in conjunction with the Child Helpline, which is operational since 2010 and supported by Azercell as its general partner.

The Child Helpline and the Women's Support Line can be reached through cellular numbers – (050) 680 22 80, (051) 580 22 80, (051) 880 11 80 and (051) 880 22 80, e-mail address (ushaqqaynarxetti@gmail.com), or via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AzerbaijanChildHelpline>) and Instagram (@ushaqqaynarxetti), or through live chat available at the Child Helpline website

(<https://childhelpline.az/index.php/az/>), and, finally, by means of the mobile app *Uşaqqaynarxetti*.

Requirements enshrined in provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and of the Optional Protocol thereto, and attainment of the goal and fulfilment of obligations within the Organisation's campaign to counter violence against women and children, including domestic violence, have been kept in view as well. Online training sessions and regional workshops have been held within the framework of the projects *Policing for the Protection of Women's Rights in Domestic Violence Cases*, *Safeguarding the Safety and Provision of Aid for People Exposed to Domestic Violence*, and *Supporting the Implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Prevention of Domestic Violence*. The afore-mentioned projects, designed by international organisations, also fostered the training of police officers in their respective capacity as training instructors. Over the past four years, some 24,265 crimes have been committed against women (5,176 in 2020, 5,593 in 2021, 6,671 in 2022, and 6,825 in 2023). Some 4,554 crimes against women were registered on grounds of jealousy and family conflicts, and other domestic issues (973 in 2020, 1,196 in 2021, 1,175 in 2022, and 1,210 in 2023). Of the 465 victims of human trafficking identified during the years 2019 to 2023, 461 were citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan versus three foreign nationals. Furthermore, of the 446 female victims of human trafficking, 429 were subjected to sexual and 17 to labour exploitation, respectively.

The Republic of Azerbaijan's Law No 1681-VQ, dated 22 October 2019, ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, signed on Lanzarote Island, Spain, on 25 October 2007. It should be noted that the Convention formulated new criminal acts constituting sexual exploitation of children and sexual violence against them, such as the child's involvement in pornographic scenes, pursuit of the child for sexual purposes and features of criminal prosecution for such crimes. The Convention also contains provisions concerning protection of the rights of child who has become victim of sexual abuse or sexual violence in the course of criminal prosecution. The Law No 776-VIQD, dated 27 December 2022, introduced fundamental amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan concerning the protection of the interests of the child. Consequently, it follows from the amendments that an adult's conscious act to invite a juvenile under 14 years of age to a meeting via information and communication technology, with an intention of sexual intercourse, sexual activity or child pornography production, and to take practical action for such a meeting to happen shall constitute criminal liability. Furthermore, having minors take part in pornographic scenes shall also constitute criminal liability.

#### **19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?**

By 2023, there were 3,680 state-registered non-governmental organizations. Of the total, 450 NGOs were chaired by women. Currently, there are 161 non-governmental organizations working on women and gender issues. A total of 155 of those organizations are headed by women. During the last three years (2021, 2022, 2023), ASSNGO



provided the total funding of AZN61,000 for eight projects related to the family, women, children and gender issues.

According to the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on public participation, involvement of citizens and civil society institutions is provided for in relation to civilian oversight covering the activities of central executive authorities, local executive authorities, and self-governing bodies assigned by a competent executive authority, and various areas of preparation and implementation of the state policy involving various strands of state and public life, as well as approval of nationwide and local decisions.

In this regard, pursuant to Regulations on the Election of Members of a Public Council by Civil Society Institutions, since April 13, 2017 till May 12, 2017, an announcement was made on the nomination and registration of candidates for the public council under SCFWCA, with elections expected during the next month. Consequently, a total of 168 candidates were running for in the elections that took place on 14 June. Meanwhile, nine out of 15 nominees were elected by a majority vote to the Public Council in their respective capacity as members.

Pursuant to Regulations on the Election of Members of a Public Council by Civil Society Institutions, on 19 February 2021, elections were held to form a new, 11-member composition of the public council under SCFWCA. Consequently, 21 candidates were registered following the submission of all documents in compliance with legislative requirements. To make arrangements for the elections to take place, an electoral commission, consisting of nine members, including four SCFWCA representatives, and five members from civil society institutions, was set up last year and approved the maximum number of members at 11, in accordance with the corresponding minutes of the Commission. SCFWCA made an announcement, since 26 January till 9 February 2009, to secure the quorum for the upcoming elections. Consequently, 98 civil society institutions applied, thereby passing through registration procedures. At the end of the election process, the votes were counted under the supervision of observers and in the presence of commission members. As a result of transparent elections, a new, 11-member composition of the Public Council was approved.

On 19 April 2023, elections were held to determine the new, 11-member composition of the Public Council under SCFWCA.

**20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?**

On 2-3 June 2022, SCFWCA and the Media Development Agency (MDA) jointly organized the two-day training course *Gender Equality and Professionalism in the Mass Media* for media representatives.

The contest *The Most Active Blogger in Promoting Family Values, the Rights of the Woman and Child* competition was announced among social media bloggers on 23 May 2022, at the proposal of the Public Council under SCFWCA. At the end of the event, the most active bloggers received a tablet, diploma and a variety of mementos from the jury

panel for the preparation and dissemination of interesting, educational and awareness-raising and different contents, as well as social impact opportunities and earning confidence of the audience, and social media viewer statistics per topic covered.

On October 19-22, 2021, the four-day international training course *Domestic Violence Coverage by the Mass Media* was held for journalists.

On 29 March 2023, SCFWCA organized the training course *Role of Mass Media in Combatting Human Trafficking: Women and Children* for media representatives, to implement relevant items of the 2020-2024 National Action Plan to combat human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and follow recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In 2023, an awareness-raising guide *Principles of Media Coverage of Women and Child Topics* was prepared and issued afterwards, to prevent mass media from disseminating information that can harm the rights and interests of the woman and child, and support the mass media that serve the interests of the general public.

On 19 July 2023, SCFWCA arranged an awards ceremony to reward winners of the competition for journalists *Media Coverage of Family, Women and Child Topics*.

On 1 November 2023, the training course *Improvement of Digital Skills of Women* was held in Aghali village of the rural district of Zangilan.

On 20 December 2023, SCFWCA held the 2nd contest *The Most Active Blogger in Promoting Family Values, the Rights of the Woman and Child*.

Pursuant to the Law on media, approved on 30 December 2021, it is prohibited to use symbols (signs) and/or their combinations (words, letters, graphs, etc.), promoting sexual or any other form of discrimination, and being contrary to standards of morality, on the logo of the editorial office of a media entity. Besides, in accordance with Article 14.1.4 of the Law in question, the information to be printed and/or broadcasted by the media, should not promote sexual discrimination.

## **21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?**

As of 17 November 2022, the Center for Day Care for People with Disabilities under the age of 18 started operating under ASS, in Pirallahi district of Baku. The main goal of the Center is to organize a continuous service based on an accessible approach for the psychosocial rehabilitation of children and juveniles with disabilities and provide social services to their families, as well as strengthen their integration into society and psychosocial support for their families, thereby preventing institutionalization.

In 2021, the project *Provision of Services by Centers for Day Care to Prevent Institutionalization of Children and Enable Access to Social Services for Children and their Families in Living through Hardship* was implemented by NGOs in relevant 24 centers across the country, following the corresponding social orders by ASS, reaching out to 720 children and juveniles (30 per center). In 2022 and 2023, the same Project made

arrangements for the provision of similar social services for 1,380 children in 46 urban and rural settlements, and 2,100 children in 21 urban and rural settlements, respectively.

Meanwhile, the goal of another project *Support for the Development of Social Shelters*, implemented in 2022 with social orders by ASS, is to accommodate the children and juveniles (except for those under 18, suffering from an infectious disease and/or mental illness), facing conditions of social dangerousness, without permanent place of residence, deprived of parental care and exposed to violence, in a social shelter that would provide them with a safe, stable and caring environment, thereby improving their well-being, protecting their rights, and enabling their comprehensive and harmonious social development. A total of 113 children and juveniles benefited from the Project in 2022, while a year later, in 2023, the number of beneficiaries reached 635, including 495 children and juveniles and 140 women.

## **22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?**

According to Article 4.11 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on political parties, No. 693-VIQ, dated 16 December 2022, men and women should have the same conditions and enjoy a level-playing field to become a member of a political party.

While there were 14 women (11.2%) in the 3rd convocation of Milli Majlis, the parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2005, their number rose to 22 (18.2%) in the 6th convocation elected in 2020. Besides, there were 62 female judges (12%) in 2015 versus 124 (21%) in 2022. Also, there were 68 female deputy heads at executive administrations in charge of the corresponding administrative divisions in 2022. Finally, women constituted 39% of the overall municipal membership following municipal elections in 2019, up from four per cent in 2004.

The 26 June 2019 Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan established the contest *Ascension*, to identify and support would-be executives with a high level of intelligence and management qualities, and make the corresponding HR database available in the country. *Ascension* is a step forward to ensure gender equality, and an example featuring a level-playing field for both men and women.

Furthermore, the methodology guide *Curriculum for Gender Equality in Civil Service* has been published for the first time in the Republic of Azerbaijan as a follow-up on efforts and other activities aimed at ensuring gender equality in public administration and decision-making. On the same note, the textbook *Gender Equality* has been written and gone to press.

## **23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

Since 2019, the basic ICT module has been added to all study programs at all levels of vocational education. The ICT module is currently being redesigned based on the European Digital Competence Framework.

Article 14 of Republic of Azerbaijan's the Law on media, which came into force in 2022, contains, inter alia, the requirement that information to be printed and/or broadcasted by the media should not promote sexual discrimination.

To develop the level of professionalism of media entities, MDA drew up non-binding *Editorial Policy and Rules of Professional Conduct* and submitted to editorial offices in April 2022. The document highlights, inter alia, the importance of exclusion of any action to promote gender discrimination in the media as part of the principles a media entity has to abide by while carrying out its activities.

Since March 2023, the MDA-implemented project *MEDIA Lab* has collaborated with different authorities (Audiovisual Council, SEA, media entities, and higher education institutions) to implement measures aimed at building capacity for the staff and making arrangements for youth employment in the field of mass media, with female students accounting for more than 70% of the total attendance. MDA-supported print and online media produced 178 awareness-raising stories and news covering gender, Family, and Demography topics om 2021, versus 160 such reports in 2022 and 196 in 2023, in accordance with the concept of state support for the development of mass media in the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved by the 31 July 2008 Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, vocational training of ICT-related educational background (graphic design, computer systems programming, cyber security, web design, software development, etc.) has continued at different (technical and specialized) levels of vocational education over the past five years. According to the available database of admissions, female students account for 40% of the total enrollment in ICT-related vocational courses, with the remaining 60% falling to the share of male students.

Finally, STEM education has been included in optional modules of the *Humanities and Basic Sciences* module set of the study programs at the level of specialized vocational education, and some vocational schools have undergone certain infrastructure upgrade to support relevant classes.

**24. Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.**

**SCFWCA was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 6 February 2006.** Eleven Child and Family Support Centers operate under SCFWCA. Starting from 2020, gender commissions were established at municipality level with the view to make systematic and coordinated efforts on gender issues, ensure women representation in elected bodies and support their participation. Gender commissions work with families from the risk groups and organize awareness-

raising activities to challenge existing stereotypes. Gender commissions play a significant role in encouraging socially vulnerable groups rural areas, particularly low-income women and women with disabilities to take action, and promoting existing employment opportunities for them. At present, such commissions operate in all municipalities. In order to intensify the efforts of the commissions in ensuring gender equality and to make their activities systematic, training courses are organized on the rights and responsibilities of municipalities and the gender equality promotion responsibilities of the gender commissions. In order to prevent gender-based violence, all executive authorities have functional Monitoring Groups against Gender and Child Violence.

**25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women's organizations)**

Significant role belongs to specialized institutional mechanisms in ensuring gender equality and preventing gender-based discrimination – Standing Commission for Family, Women and Children's Issues at Milli Majlis (parliament), Monitoring Groups against Gender and Child Violence, gender staff, gender commissions, Child and Family Support Centers and WRCs.

SCFWCA closely collaborates with all institutional mechanisms including the Family, Women and Children Affairs Commission of the National Assembly to improve and amend gender equality legislation. In order to prevent gender-based violence, the Committee cooperates with Gender and Child Violence Monitoring Groups and gender commissions.

SCFWCA expands and improves the activities of the network of staff responsible for gender issues. The Committee regularly conducts training courses for gender staff of various institutions, including local executive authorities. The Gender Azerbaijan (genderazerbaijan.com) portal was created to strengthen coordination among and performance of gender staff members, ensure their networking, and also to assist in implementation of gender equality activities based on the principles of higher transparency.

WRCs organize awareness raising meetings between schoolchildren, their parents, teachers, as well as local community members on prevention of early marriage, girls' school dropout, domestic violence, human trafficking, gender equality, human rights, consequences of drug addiction, financial literacy, NGO creation, CV writing, reproductive health, selective abortion and its consequences; they also arrange computer and professional development courses on budget management, business and leadership skills development, and strengthening entrepreneurial activity.

Child and Family Support Centers carry out social work with women and families from risk groups at the community level to prevent children from going to boarding institutions, their evasion of education, early marriage, domestic violence, human trafficking; they work to promote gender equality culture, organize leisure time for

teenagers of vulnerable age and provide other relevant preventive measures, monitoring and investigations.

In general, as a result of recent appointments, the share of young judges in the judiciary exceeds 80%. Also, up to 50% of the new appointees are women, which shows adherence to the gender equality principles and the activeness of women in various aspects of public life in our country. It should be noted that to facilitate access to justice for all citizens, including women, and to digitize court activities, with the participation of the World Bank, the Electronic Court information system was created and its full implementation throughout the country completed in June 2023. The new version of the Mobile Court application that meets the advanced requirements, has a wide functionality and modern design is complete and it allows users to see all court cases they are a party to, track their progress, make a request, complaint or claim and send it to the relevant court institution. It is possible to apply electronically to the lawyer and mediator organization, as well as to the technical service "Hotline", and to join the court session online. It is also possible to obtain information about existing court institutions, judges and court cases, anonymized decisions, lawyers and mediator organizations.

**26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?**

The Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan acts as the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in Azerbaijan.

The Ombudsman's mission is to restore human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party, which are violated by state or local authorities and officials of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and to prevent violation of human rights in cases stipulated by constitutional law.

In order to prevent violation of the rights of women and girls, domestic violence, early marriage and the resulting early pregnancy, informal marriages, and to increase the girls school attendance, expand education opportunities for young mothers, eliminate women's ICT illiteracy, legal awareness events, numerous trainings and seminars, exhibitions and competitions were organized in the capital city and regions within the framework of the *Human Rights Month*, *Peace Month* and *Children's Rights Month* initiatives launched by the Ombudsman Office.

The Ombudsman Office staff provided lectures on women's rights, gender equality, fight against violence etc. within Human Rights and Introduction to Gender subjects. In 2023, Introduction to Gender lecture compilation was updated and translated into English, then published under the general editorship of the Ombudsman and made available to professionals and students.

In 2023, according to the amendments to the Constitutional Law on the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ombudsman received new powers. As specified in the Article 1.3-1 thereto, the Ombudsman performs the functions of an independent monitoring mechanism for

tracking and promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring the right to equality and preventing discrimination.

Protection of the rights of female convicts was also taken into account by the Ombudsman. The National Preventive Group visited the Ministry of Justice's Penitentiary Service for Juveniles, Pretrial Detention Center No. 2, as well as Penitentiary No. 4, and examined the conditions of detention of women and minors, their treatment, and their rights protection, as well as monitored prophylaxis against the COVID-19 pandemic and investigated related problems there. Taking into account the proposals made by the Ombudsman in previous years regarding construction of new penitentiary institutions that meet modern standards, in 2022 new buildings of the Educational Institution for Juveniles, which are a vulnerable group of society, and penitentiary institution No. 4 for female prisoners were commissioned.

**27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

The SCFWCA has drafted a National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The draft is under review pursuant to the Guidelines on preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of state programs, approved by 6 March 2021 Decree #1294 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

CRCs established under project *Quick recovery of the most vulnerable groups of the population in Fuzuli-Horadiz, Aghjabadi and Tartar regions of Azerbaijan and securing community sustainability* are designed to help identify the most important needs of the affected communities, as well as provide socio-economic recovery support to the affected citizens, with the main focus on women, children and people with disabilities. The main mission of the centers is to strengthen the entrepreneurial skills of women in remote areas and to increase their competitiveness in the job market, as well as to support them in overcoming the socio-economic difficulties they face. The services provided by the centers include housing opportunities for citizens, psychological and social and business counseling services. Also, this project helps increase women's access to the labor market, develop their entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities and improve professional training.

Five female MPs attend the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Assembly as the

Azerbaijani delegation members. Those MPs participate in the process of the regional context analysis and the current situation evaluation.

**29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

Following Armenia's non-compliance with international legal instruments on the protection of women's rights during military conflicts, including the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency Situations and Armed Conflicts, as well as major violations of the requirements of the 1949 Geneva Convention, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudsman) made appeals to the world community and addressed substantiated reports to international organizations.

Addressing statements and appeals to influential international organizations, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan condemned the aggressive policy of Armenia against our country, stated that during the first Karabakh War about 4,000 of our compatriots, among whom there were many women and children, were missing, taken hostage with no further information about their fate to this day, and called for the prevention of such incidents. The Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan also brought to the attention that during the occupation Armenia imposed mine terror on the territory of Azerbaijan that caused victims among women stating the importance of accurate mine maps provision to our country and the fact that buried mines create a serious obstacle to the safe return to the liberated areas and large-scale restoration and construction works, and pointed out to the violation of human rights calling for condemnation and appropriate punitive actions.

In the letters addressed to the regional director of UNICEF for Europe and Central Asia, to the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, as well as in the video appeal sent to international and regional organizations on the International Day of Missing Persons, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan urged Armenia's civilian population, including women and children to condemn the serious violation of international documents on the protection of human rights during conflicts and call for appropriate punitive measures.

The project *Psycho-social support to children and families of fallen heroes in the post-war period* implemented by SCFWCA was designed to strengthen measures to provide social and psychological support to the children of families that suffer from the Armenian aggression. The project involved 10-16-year-old children selected from the families of martyrs and veterans, being under the care of their mothers, as well as from low-income families. During the project, psychologists conducted various psychological tests with 50 schoolchildren of two age groups, evaluated the psychological condition of the children, prepared an individual development plan for the identified issues, and conducted individual psychological sessions.



**30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?**

In 2020, a CoA decision approved Action Plan on the prevention of gender-biased sex selection for 2020-2025. The action plan envisages conducting research among the population to assess the extent of gender-based sex selection, preparing proposals to ensure gender equality and improve reproductive health legislation. The document envisages measures such as strengthening control over the implementation of the "List of social instructions on artificial termination of pregnancy", implementing awareness raising measures to prevent girls school dropout, increasing support for women entrepreneurs, and expanding courses on the most demanded professions and specialties in the labor market. Among measures in the Action Plan are the following: strengthening control over the activities of preschool education institutions, applying discounts to improve access to those institutions for single mothers as well as mothers with many children. Also, the document envisages the stimulation of entrepreneurship and self-employment among women, the impact of gender ratio distortion on the demographic structure of the population, and awareness-raising about the harm of abortions to reproductive health. The promotion of family values and traditions among the population, especially youngsters, and awareness expansion in this area are also reflected in the document. The Action Plan also includes strengthened awareness activities to prevent early marriages, stricter corrective measures and their practical implementation in rural areas etc. The main goal of the newly approved Action Plan is to prevent gender-based sex selection and reduce the preference given to boys over girls in families, and to eliminate the gender stereotypes that cause this preference.

On 1 June 2019, on the occasion of 1 June – Children's Protection Day, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Heydar Aliyev Foundation, "Azerbaijan Railways" CJSC, UNICEF and Ganja City Executive Authority jointly organized entertainment and promotion event "To the future with speed and confidence". The purpose of the event was to draw public attention to protection of children's rights, increase the participation and activeness of children in this area and provide them with relevant opportunities.

A 10-day summer camp for children was jointly organized by SCFWCA and UNICEF from 29 July till 7 August 2019. Forty children between 6 and 16 years from low-income families attended the camp. During the summer camp, children were involved in active discussions and team work in the following courses: *Children's rights: know and share our rights, Healthy lifestyle for children, environmental protection, Effective organization and evaluation of free time, Bullying against children, Mastering life skills!, Children's internet safety and their protection from online violence, Development of children's leadership qualities. Leadership and management – skills and requirements, Family budget management.*

On June 15, 2020, an online training was provided by SCFWCA on "Early marriage and its consequences". The training, intended for both children and parents, provides detailed information about arranged marriages, the concept of early marriage and its consequences.

Promotion posters prepared by SCFWCA (*Marriage under 18 is child marriage!, You will have a daughter!*) were displayed on the advertising monitors in Baku Bas urban vehicles owned by Baku Transport Agency. The broadcast started on 12 February 2021 and continued for two months.

Since 16 March 2021, with the support of SCFWCA, the Assembly of Children's Ambassadors, an organization created as the SCFWCA project, held a series of online awareness raising events *Girls, join the discussion* with female students of the secondary schools located in Gobu settlement of Absheron region, Mashtaga settlement of Sabunchu district and Nardaran settlement of Masalli district. At the events, the Committee provided detailed information on increasing children's knowledge and skills, unlocking their potential, developing independent self-expression skills, protecting children from violence in society, and raising their human rights awareness.

On 18 November 2021, the 5<sup>th</sup> Republican Forum of Azerbaijani Children was held under the joint organization of SCFWCA, "the Regional Development" Public Union and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

On 15 April 2022, SCFWCA, in cooperation with the Center for Public Health and Reforms of the Ministry of Health held "Selective abortions and early marriages. Reproductive health and family planning" training course at the Ismaili Children and Families Support Center.

In accordance with the subsection 4.5.2 of the 2020-2024 National Action Plan to combat human trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2173 dated July 22, 2020, analytical report on strengthening control, evidence-based detection of child marriages was prepared.

In 2023, with the participation of students of general education institutions in Sabunchu district, "Do not be silent, make your voice heard!" project was implemented. The project was organized with the aim of expanding awareness raising activities among schoolchildren about domestic violence, early marriage and school dropout and their consequences.

Since 19 April 2023, among other topics prepared by SCFWCA, an electronic poster *Early marriage makes a parent a criminal!* and the related video reel were broadcast on the monitors of high-speed electric trains owned by Azerbaijan Railways CJSC.

The summer camp "We are the future" was organized by SCFWCA on July 23-29, 2023. Members of the Assembly of Children's Ambassadors and activists of the V Republican Forum of Azerbaijani Children, selected for their special talents, attended the summer camp. The main goal of the event was to organize teenager camps during the summer holidays, ensure the rights of participation, provide the platform for suggestions and also encourage children's free thinking and self-expression skills, as well as making new friends.

CoM decision #213, dated 23 June 2020, approved the Rules on raising the awareness of juveniles about the importance of family and marriage, and securing information about negative consequences of early marriage and consanguineous

marriage. Along with other government agencies, the Ministry of Justice informs teenagers who officially apply for marriage about negative impact of early marriage and consanguineous marriage on their life and health, quality of life, spiritual and psychological development. Civil registry offices of the Ministry of Justice ensure that young people of early marriageable age (up to 18) are informed about the negative impact of early marriage and consanguineous marriage on their life and health, quality of life, and spiritual and psychological development.

**31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?**

*A Clean Environment and a Country of “Green” Growth* is one of the five priorities highlighted in the concept *Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-economic Development*. To reach that priority, work is underway to improve environmental sanitation, restore and expand green spaces, ensure the efficient utilization of water resources and sustainable energy sources. Furthermore, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an Order to mark 2024 as the *Green World Solidarity Year*. Moreover, ADWE organized and held an event dedicated to Women’s Solidarity for a Green World and Innovative Future.

Besides, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an Order to host the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29), as well as 19th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and the 6th session of the Conference of the parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, in Baku in November 2024, with several women, representing different authorities, included in the composition of the corresponding Organizing Committee.

**32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?**

The Government of Azerbaijan takes active works towards integrating gender equality goals into the National Action Plans. Azerbaijan’s gender aspects are included in the following projects and action plans on climate change for the years 2020-2026:

- *Society that Empowers Women and Girls and is based on Gender Equality* was selected as the 4th Priority Area in the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework between the United Nations and Azerbaijan for 2021-2025.
- In 2022, within the framework of the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project *Development of Innovation-driven and Sustainable Civil Society in Azerbaijan*, a Guidebook was prepared on the development and implementation of community projects that respond to gender-based needs and change the gender context.

- GEF-funded and UNEP-implemented project *Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement* (CBIT).

- The support project for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was implemented for the adaptation planning purposes in Azerbaijan. Funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), this project is designed to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through consultations with stakeholders in the three priority sectors identified by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan – water, agriculture and coastal areas and to support the Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) efforts for better climate change adaptation (CCA). Support for NAP preparation aims to increase climate change resilience and adaptation capacity in three key sectors through activities that will reduce or eliminate barriers to an effective adaptation process at the national and local level.

Under the mentioned projects, awareness-raising seminars and webinars were regularly held for women and other groups that are more sensitive to the effects of climate changes to apply technologies that reduce effects and adapt to the consequences of climate change. A number of sectoral and general analytical and guidance documents were developed to integrate gender perspectives into climate change policies and programs at the national level.

In order to integrate gender perspectives in the field of biodiversity protection, gender equality issue always prevailed at the events held by the Biological Diversity Protection Service under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. For example, in past years, on the occasion of the International Women's Day on 8 March, Open Door day was organized for women to visit national parks free of charge. The participation of female employees in the events held by the Service and its subordinate bodies was preferred, and awareness raising meetings on the role of women in society were held for female employees of the Service at least biannually.

The events held on the occasion of ecological calendar days provided space in national parks for women to develop private businesses, sell handicrafts and other products.

1. Exhibition and fair of micro and small entrepreneurs organized by the Association of SMB Subjects and Clubs (KOBSCA) with the support of the Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources (MENR) and KOBIA was held under the motto *Produce, do not harm nature!* in Absheron National Park. Some 100 product varieties of about 20 entrepreneurs were offered at the fair.

2. On 21 November 2023, the inaugural *Flamingo Festival* was held in the Kyzylagac National Park. Representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and international organizations participated in the festival that displayed various stands of female and male entrepreneurs and attracted over 500 tourists.

3. Majority of fish-breeding workers at Khilli Balıq LLC and Kıçık Kyzylagac Fishery are women which is a clear example of maintaining gender balance during employment.

The 2022-2026 Social and Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan envisages preparation of the State Program for Low Carbon Development and inclusion of gender aspects thereto.

**33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.**

National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan was prepared for eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination, creating equal opportunities for women and men, supporting women from socially vulnerable groups, strengthening the promotion and outreach of gender culture, and achieving other goals in this direction, based on the international obligations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the objectives defined in the country's legislation. Implementation of the measures envisaged in the National Action Plan will have the following expected outcomes:

- improved legislative and institutional framework on gender equality;
- strengthened gender equality in various spheres of public life;
- increased public awareness in women's rights and gender equality;
- reduced girls school dropout and early marriage;
- reduced gender stereotypes and sexual discrimination;
- elimination of topics reflecting gender stereotypes in education materials;
- expanded economic opportunities for women, increased number of women engaged in entrepreneurial activity;
- knowledge of the basic needs of women from the socially vulnerable group, their increased employment opportunities;
- women's digital skills development, increased role of women in development of new technologies and innovative solutions.

**34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.**

In accordance with paragraph 34 of the Guidelines for a comprehensive national-scale review, **in 2023, with the EU technical assistance, training courses were conducted for the Ministry of Finance (MoF) staff to increase their awareness and capacity in the gender equality component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the gender-sensitive budgeting.**

**Under technical assistance within the European Union for project *Gender Equality: Reform Assistance Service*, measures are envisaged to prepare the methodological and regulatory framework for the SDG gender equality component**

**and the gender-sensitive budgeting, as well as training courses are planned to increase the Ministry of Finance capacity in 2024.**

It is also planned to implement measures towards SDGs integration into budgeting processes including climate change and gender aspects, as well as classification of budget expenditures according to SDGs and other policies.

**35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Azerbaijan joined the global SDGs, which include 17 goals and 169 targets reflected in the *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda* adopted by world leaders at the Sustainable Development Summit of UN member states in September 2015. SDG 5 is dedicated to achieving gender equality, as well as increasing empowerment of all girls and women. In order to coordinate the fulfillment of the government institutions responsibilities for the Sustainable Development by 2030, the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1066 dated October 6. 2016. The main goal of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan is to determine the national priorities and indicators on the global goals and objectives that are important for Azerbaijan until 2030, and to harmonize the socio-economic state programs and strategies with the SDGs. as well as prepare the annual progress report on the SDGs. For implementation of its functions the Council has the authority to involve local and foreign experts and specialists, international organizations and scientific institutions, as well as working groups in different areas.

According to the commitment assumed, it has been decided to establish the Secretariat of the Council to be accountable to Ministry of Economy, provide statistical data on the progress towards SDG achievements to State Statistical Committee, and submit related performance report to the Council.

For its part, SCFWCA submits annual progress report on relevant SDGs, including SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all girls and women).

**36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

The corresponding report has been compiled on the basis of answers of relevant government agencies to the respective set of survey questions they had received in due time. The survey included SCFWCA, the Ministry for Internal Affairs, MLSP, MoE, MoF, the Ministry of Justice, MENR, MoH, SSC, the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudswoman), the MDDT, MSE, ASSNGO, and MDA.

**37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.**

The following government documents are adopted in fulfilling the obligations arising from the CEDAW Convention: 2020-2023 National Action Plan to combat domestic violence, 2020-2025 Action Plan on prevention of gender-based sex selection and Regulations on raising the awareness of juveniles about the importance of family and marriage, and safeguard information about negative consequences of early marriage and consanguineous marriage.

The State Committee considers it important to implement the following measures in order to eliminate existing gender equality gaps and to fulfill the international obligations undertaken by our country:

1. Strengthening activities in fulfillment of the obligations arising from CEDAW;
2. Adoption of the draft National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan;
3. Better implementation mechanisms of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on gender equality (between men and women);
4. Improvement of gender-based violence and domestic violence legislation, in particular, revision of sanctions and fines for domestic violence, termination of administrative cases based on reconciliation of the parties, inclusion of domestic violence provisions in the criminal legislation, improvement of the investigation mechanism in domestic violence cases;
5. Amendments to legislation to introduce 14-day paid paternity leave instead of current unpaid one;
6. Amendments to the legislation to introduce sanctions for sexual harassment and discriminatory job postings;
7. Gender equality protection in political parties, expansion of opportunities for equal presence and participation in management and decision-making, legislative improvement;
8. Adoption of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Family Planning and Reproductive Health (this is also reflected in the CEDAW recommendations for Azerbaijan);
9. Provision of immediate and comprehensive assistance to domestic violence victims, development of relevant infrastructure (new assistance and asylum centers, hotlines) in accordance with international standards;
10. Development of gender-based budgeting policy and practice;

11. Collection of comprehensive statistical information and a creation of reliable database on the women position on the labor market;
12. Strengthening measures against sexual harassment at work;
13. Strengthening measures related to prevention of gender-based sex selection;
14. Strengthening monitoring of girls' school dropout;
15. Accordingly, inclusion of topics on women's rights and gender equality in curricula at all education levels;
16. Conducting gender examination on education resources at all education levels;
17. Strengthening activities on gender equality culture promotion in all spheres of public life, in the public and private sector;
18. Increasing the equal presence of women and men at the management and decision-making level in all areas of public life, in the public and private sectors;
19. Strengthening of preventive measures on gender-based violence, especially expanding information and awareness raising actions in the regions;
20. Involvement of more adult and young men in the underrepresented labor market segments, elimination of related gender stereotypes in these areas;
21. Provision of comprehensive support for raising women's economic activeness, especially in rural areas to ensure their equal rights with men;
22. Developing new mechanisms for encouraging women's entrepreneurship;
23. Continued measures on the preschool education infrastructure development to expand the employment opportunities of employees with family obligations;
24. Organization of vocational training on the most demanded professions to increase the women's competitiveness on the labor market.

**38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**

SSC attaches special importance to the collection, processing, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical data that include classification of problems and issues related to the status of women and men in society by gender and age. Here SSC focuses on the statistical review of gender problems, introduction of new indicators to the system of statistical indicators, methodology improvement and study of the experience in advanced countries.

SSC annually prepares and publishes a statistical compilation *Women and Men in Azerbaijan* in Azerbaijani and English; the electronic version of the publication is posted on the official website of the Committee. In order to ensure gender statistics update, new statistical indicators are regularly introduced and categorized by gender in the said



publication. Currently, there are more than 370 indicators on gender statistics. It is planned to introduce the required and recommended new indicators on gender statistics in the compilation published by SSC for the years to come.

In order to collect information about youngsters, including gender issues, a statistical compilation *Azerbaijani youth* is annually published in the Azerbaijani and English languages. The mentioned collection is posted on the website of the State Statistics Committee <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/ay/>.

### Number of women leaders

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Chairperson of Milli Majlis (parliament)			1	1	1
Vice-president	1	1	1	1	1
Ombudsman		1	1	1	2
Minister	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Minister	6	8	8	9	8
Chairperson of the State Committee	2	2	2	2	2
Deputy Chairperson of the State Committee	3	3	3	3	3
Local Chief Executive	1	1	1	2	1
Deputy Local Chief Executive	79	76	72	72	68
Ambassador				2	3

*As the table shows, the number of female ambassadors increased in 2022 compared to 2021.*

*The number of female MPs in Milli Majlis (parliament) is 22.*

4 out of 38 judges in the Supreme Court, 18 out of 125 judges in appeal courts, 89 out of 384 judges in 1st instance courts (total number of judges 547, including 111 women) are women. Currently, 22.4% of prosecutor's offices staff are women. The number of female prosecutors was 8.8% in 2020, 8.2% in 2021, and 8.7% in 2022. Compared to last year, an increase in the number of female prosecutors is observed. Meanwhile, 12.1% of the prosecutor's offices staff work at management level, of which 11.7% are men, and 0.4% are women. According to the 2022 data, 1378 (or 17.9%) of the total 7717 staff in the justice system are women with 83 women and 560 men at management level. Also, 21 out of 149 special notaries are women. With this, the total number of women in the justice system reached 1399, and the number of female leaders reached 104. 4921 men

and 320 women are employed in the penitentiary service, 560 men and 132 women are in the executive and probation services.

In 2022, the number of female staff in the law enforcement units under the Ministry of Internal Affairs was 3,973. 63 of them worked in management positions. Compared to 2021, there is an increase in the total number of female staff in 2022 - 0.9% (3938 women in 2021). In the management positions, there is a decrease compared to last year (72 women in 2021). In 2022, 1,850 people joined police service, of which 1,748 were men and 102 were women. The total number of people admitted to the Police Academy in 2020, 2021 and 2022 was 1,185 (372 in 2020, 372 in 2021, 402 and 411 in 2022). 1178 of them (369 in 2020, 400 in 2021 and 409 in 2022) were men, 7 were women (3 in 2020, 2 in 2021, 2 in 2022).

Another priority area of gender equality is related to education. At the same time, equal access to education for women and men is one of the legal equality fundamentals in the country. In our country, men and women have equal opportunities to exercise their right to education.

- *There were 2572 women with PhD degree in 2001, and 5325 in 2023. Within 20 years, female PhDs increased by 2.07 times, i.e. by 107%.*
- *Female doctors of science were 152 in 2001 and 515 in 2023. There are 7 female academicians and 9 female corresponding members of the academy of sciences.*
- *In the teaching staff of higher education institutions, women dominate over men with 63%.*

According to the gender analysis of medical personnel of state medical institutions, 70.1% of them are women. 59.3% are men and 40.7% are women in management positions. According to the 2021 data, women made 48.8% (2590.2 thousand people) of the labor force (economically active population), and 48.3% among the employed (2408.1 thousand people). 14.4% of employed women have higher education, 14.0% - secondary education, 3.5% - vocational education and 68.1% - secondary education. Compared to men, women have significant presence in education (72.7%), health and social services (78.3%), recreational, science and technical areas (44.8%), recreation, entertainment and arts (61.2%), financial and insurance (36.1%), water supply and waste regulation and processing (35.8%).

### **39. Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?**

On a general note, countrywide statistical data, including gender statistics are compiled, presented, published as periodicals, submitted to all government agencies and authorities, and downloaded onto the web-site of SSC.

#### **Forward-looking action to improve gender statistics in Azerbaijan**

- ✓ New gender statistics indicators shall be gradually added to the statistical compendium *Women and men in Azerbaijan*;
- ✓ Third edition of the system of comprehensive statistical indicators of gender equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be translated from Azerbaijani to English and downloaded on to the SSC web-site;
- ✓ Expansion of the data scope and further refinement of the *Gender* section on the SSC web-site;
- ✓ Having the international experience taken into account, SSC staff shall be equipped with new sets of knowledge and skills to collect, process, and apply gender statistics in practice;
- ✓ The statistical system shall be focused on gender issues, particularly collection of usually neglected, therefore unavailable sex-disaggregated data in the country.

#### **40. What gender-specific indicators has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* has highlighted gender issues and is shaped by 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with the fifth one dealing directly with gender equality. Assessment of the progress towards Goal 5 (*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*) is made against 14 global SDG indicators, with 12 of them approved as national priorities in our country.

##### **National priority indicators for SDG 5 (gender equality):**

5.1.1. Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

5.2.1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.

5.3.1. Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.

5.4.1. Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location.

5.5.1. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments.

5.5.2. Proportion of women in managerial positions.

5.6.1. Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.

5.6.2. Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.

5.a.1. (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

5.a.2. Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.

5.b.1. Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.

5.c.1. Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

#### **41. Which data disaggregations are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

Annual reports submitted by SCFWCA to Milli Majlis, the legislature of the Republic of Azerbaijan, per Article 20 of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Law on gender equality (between men and women), contain data referring to various measures taken to ensure gender equality in various sectors, and recommendations on closing gaps. The electronic version of the annual report is downloaded on to SCFWCA web-site.

Pursuant to paragraph 5.1.3.1 of the 2018-2025 State Program on Improvement of Official Statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan, approved by the Order #3672, dated 14 February 2018, of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, SSC, with involvement of competent authorities, conducted a multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS-6), to produce statistical data with the purpose of assessing social well-being dimension of human development pertaining to women and children, measuring the progress towards targets under Sustainable Development Goals, and ensuring international comparability. UNICEF and the European Union were also involved in the survey by mutual consent. Findings of the survey will be incorporated in the outcome evaluation report which is currently under preparation.

SCFWCA has compiled a wide range of data classified by geographical location, age, sex, gender, level of education, level of income, and marital status, under the following reports and surveys: Contemporary Family Policy of the State (2022), Family Relationship in Azerbaijan: Socio-psychological Analysis (2021), Analysis of Judicial Practice to Defend Victims of Domestic Violence (2022), Analytical Report on the Country-specific Situation with Inbreeding Cases (2022), Analytical Report on Strengthened Control of Out-of-hospital Births and Subsequent Disclosure of Child Marriage Cases (2022), Investigation into Non-formal Employment among Women, Gender Analysis of Admissions to Civil Service in the Republic of Azerbaijan (2022), Women in Science (2022), Sexual Harassment in the Republic of Azerbaijan: Legislation and its Practical Application (2022), SCFWCA Communication on Gender Equality (between Men and Women) in the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021), Analytical Report on the Position and Role of the Child in Family Relationship in the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021), Analysis of a Package of Proposals to Study Socio-psychological Aspects of Human Trafficking in Regions, Identify and Eliminate the Corresponding Root Causes (2021), Analytical Report on the Assessment of the Prevalence of the Use of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic

Substances among Juveniles (2021), Analytical Report on the Impact of the Medium on Suicides (2022), Analytical Report on Gender Inequality at Executive Positions at Educational Institutions (2022), Analytical Report on Accessibility and Provision of Services at early Childhood (2022), Reasons behind, Prevalence, Consequences, and Prevention of Violence against Children (2022), and Eliminating Early Marriages: Legislation and its Practical Application (2022).